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ENGL 2152

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University of New Orleans

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Technical Writing

English 2152~Fall 2015

Section 002 (M/W, 3:30 to 4:45)

Instructor: Reggie J. Poché

Office: 291-A, Liberal Arts Building

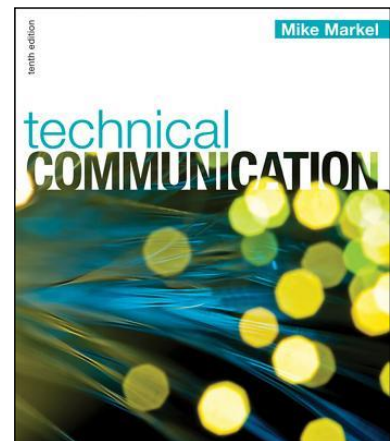
Office Hours: Wednesday—1:30 to 3:30

Tuesday and Thursday—9:00 to 10:00

- Phone: 280-6469
- E-mail: rjpoche3@uno.edu
- *Appointments outside of my office hours may be arranged through email.

Textbook

Markel, Mike. *Technical Communication*, 10th edition
(ISBN-10: 0312679483)



Course Objective

The goal of this course is to initiate students into the culture of technical and workplace communicators so that they may learn to successfully negotiate the complexities of writing for a variety of workplace audiences and for a variety of purposes. Employers seek writers who can compose precise, competent prose while maintaining equal pace with daily operations. These writers are highly valued, thus handsomely paid.

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to produce various technical documents (résumés, letters, memos, sets of instructions, informational and analytical reports, manuals, and, ultimately, a formal report). The process of writing these documents will teach students how to conduct formal research (through both digital and print sources), which also needs to be completed expeditiously and under deadline. Students will also learn how to conduct interviews and design and deliver digital and oral presentations—communicative skills that are as essential as writing. Collaborative assignments will also teach students how to work as a group to achieve the same goal. In addition to becoming better editors of their own writing, students will also become fair and accurate editors of the writing of others. By the end of the semester, students will have developed a respect for deadlines and a professional courteousness that will carry over to their working lives.

While this is a writing-intensive course, lively, yet professional, participation is also expected in each class discussion. Critical reading is also an integral skill, which is necessary for the uniform development of our own writing powers. In other words, an examination of how others think and write will inform how you write, making your own prose better. You must know what a good report or memo is to write one yourself.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will be able to

- Understand the forms and functions of a variety of business and technical documents, including résumés, business letters, memos, manuals, and recommendation, informational, and analytical reports.
- Adapt workplace documents to appropriately address a variety of specific audiences, including expert and non-specialist audiences.
- Adapt the basic forms of technical documents to address the specific rhetorical situations of workplace and technical writing, such as purpose, audience, and scope of work.
- Work collaboratively with their peers to conduct research, to analyze documents, and to compose largescale written projects.
- Present their ideas to stakeholders in a visually accurate and verbally cogent manner.
- Write with clarity, concision, and precision.

Assignments

- Four major projects
Each project involves one or several written documents; one involves creating a Prezi or PowerPoint presentation.
- Reading and grammar quizzes (Hey, we can always use a little grammar!)
- Short mini-lectures and writing assignments based on technical and business communication case studies
- Assigned reading from the textbook
- Supplemental journal writing
- Various in-class writing assignments—individual and collaborative

Reading Quizzes

We will have regular reading quizzes for the textbook chapters that pertain to each of the four main projects. It is your responsibility to complete these quizzes by the deadline listed on the course schedule in Moodle. Once a deadline passes, the system will not allow you to complete the quiz. Sometimes, the Moodle system tells a student that a quiz answer he or she provided is incorrect when, in fact, the student provided the correct answer. If this happens to you, tell me as soon as possible in writing (through e-mail), and I will correct the error in your quiz if it is warranted and give you the credit for those missed points. An answer may be counted as incorrect if your response contains a typo, a missing special character, incorrect punctuation, etc. Make sure that you proofread your quiz responses to limit the chances of Moodle counting a correct answer as incorrect. I cannot offer credit for incorrect answers resulting from sloppy proofreading.

Grading

***Project 1**

20% of the final grade

***Project 2**

25% of the final grade

***Project 3**

20% of final grade

***Project 4**

25% of final grade

***Reading quizzes, grammar quizzes, journals, and short writing assignments (tentative)**

5% of final grade

*** Participation and Attendance**

Attending class regularly, contributing to class discussion, submitting work by deadline,
and visiting Moodle regularly
5% of final grade

Scale for final grades: 90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79=C, 60-69=D, below 60=F

I do not accept late assignments. You cannot make up quizzes or short writing assignments.

I rarely accept work submitted through e-mail.

Students must type (single- or double-spaced as appropriate) all work, which includes using Times New Roman—12 pt. font. Journals and all other small writing assignments must be written under the same considerations of style, grammatical correctness, and inquiry as formal projects.

Your projects will be graded on the success with which you fulfill the following criteria:

1. Your work should demonstrate that you understand the rhetorical concepts presented in the class.
2. You should demonstrate skill in applying these concepts.

Grade of A

This student demonstrates a complete awareness and understanding of the rhetorical concepts presented in the course and executes them with precise, error-free prose.

Grade of B

This student demonstrates a proficient awareness and understanding of the rhetorical concepts presented in the course and has a modicum difficulty executing them effectively. The student's writing may contain a few noticeable, yet minor, errors.

Grade of C

This student demonstrates a limited awareness and understanding of some the rhetorical concepts presented in the course and has difficulty executing some of them effectively. The student's writing is competent but lacks complete mastery.

Grade of D

This student demonstrates a limited awareness and understanding of most of the rhetorical concepts presented in the course and has difficulty executing most of them effectively. The student's writing is disorganized and unattuned to audience. It also contains pervasive error.

Grade of F

This student does not demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the rhetorical concepts presented in the course and has difficulty executing nearly all of them effectively. The student's writing does not meet minimum standards of proficiency.

The Public Nature of Writing

Since academic writing (and most writing) is directed toward an audience, you should consider the writing that you do in this course "public," that is, writing that others will read.

Obviously, I will read what you write. But, in the case of Peer Review, other students will also read your work. This provides a great learning opportunity for both reader and writer but also needs to be considered when picking topics and when writing. If there is a personal subject that you don't feel comfortable sharing, it would probably be best to write about something else in class. Also, I will periodically use stellar examples of student writing in class. I will use your writing ONLY to demonstrate fantastic examples of what we're doing, however. If there is writing that you would rather I not use for this purpose, you can note it on the paper and/or send me an email.

Portfolio

Students (both individually and in groups) must maintain comprehensive records of the research and informal written work leading to the completion of each project. A portfolio including these records and the final project must be turned in to me before I can grade it. Students will fail the assignment if the portfolio does not accompany the final project.

Absences

You are expected to attend class every day and to arrive on-time. Students may be excused from approximately three hours of class time over the course of the semester, which translates to **three MWF class periods**. Beyond that, it is likely that your final course grade will be negatively affected because you will have missed too many in-class activities and assignments. Please note that students who are consistently tardy will be counted absent.

In accordance with UNO policy, "A student who is not present to answer roll call is marked absent." You are responsible for being in class, being on time, and having all writing, reading, or other assigned work completed. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and for having all assignments completed for the next class, regardless of the reason you were not present. If you wish to find out what was covered in the class in your absence, you must come to my office to see me. Do not e-mail me or call to ask about missed material. Your grade will be lowered by a letter for every day an assignment is late. **Any failure to have an assigned draft for a peer review workshop will also be counted as an absence since you will not be able to participate.**

Academic Integrity

We all share the responsibility of protecting the free exchange of ideas that is fundamental to the college experience. If we fail to safeguard the academic integrity of our institution, severe disciplinary action is taken. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, plagiarism, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty.

This class is a place where the intellectual property of others is consulted in order for us to form our own opinions through insightful, intelligent prose that adds to the academic dialogue. If we fail to credit the ideas of these other authors, we are committing the act of plagiarism, which is an egregious ethical violation that is dealt with harshly. Acts of plagiarism undermine the entire process of academic inquiry. Using papers from other classes, passing someone's writing off as your own, or failing to credit sources come with serious consequences. If I discover solid evidence of plagiarism, I will follow the University guidelines and file an Academic Dishonesty Report. If you think you may be crossing the line in how you use sources, ask me.

When directed, you will submit digital copies of certain major essays. Before I grade them, they will be reviewed by Turn-It-In, a program in Moodle that compares student writing to a database of

published work and work written by other UNO students and reports suspected cases of plagiarism to the instructor.

Completion of all major projects is required to pass the course. A plagiarized project constitutes an incomplete project and results in failing the course.

Refer to UNO's Student Code of Conduct for additional information. It is available online in the student handbook at

<http://www.uno.edu/student-affairs-enrollment-management/documents/academic-dishonesty-policy-rev2014.pdf>

Conferences

Please take advantage of my office hours, posted at the top of the syllabus. We can also make an appointment outside of my scheduled hours, but you must keep the appointment or at least give me the courtesy of canceling with a phone call. If not, this privilege will be revoked, and you may only see me during my scheduled office hours.

Moodle

This course will use Moodle extensively. Supplementary readings, assignments, quizzes, and digital content will be posted regularly, and I will notify you through your UNO e-mail account whenever I do so. If you have never used Moodle, don't worry. I will give you a tutorial during the second week of class.

You will be responsible for checking Moodle on a regular basis and for completing all assignments, quizzes, or other work I assign on it. Also, you should make a habit of regularly checking your UNO e-mail account.

You can gain Moodle access by following this link: <http://uno.mrooms3.net/login/index.php>

Writing Center

I have posted my office hours. Please feel free to stop by if you need help with your projects. If I am not available, the Writing Center is another option. Tutors are available to help you with your writing in LA 334 (280-7054). I encourage you to take advantage of this service, but remember that it is not the tutors' function to correct, revise, or edit your essays. They are there to help you learn strategies and skills to strengthen and improve your writing on your own. <http://www.uno.edu/lrc/writingcenter/>

Computer Labs

Out-of-class projects and other written work must be typed. If you do not have a computer at home, utilize one of the many labs around campus.

Cell Phones and Pagers

I understand that cell phone use has become a way of life. However, **in this class, you should turn off your phone and put it out of sight completely.** If I see you text messaging during class, or anything of that nature, I will be forced to deduct credit from your participation grade. Our class is not long: you can be disconnected from the outside world for that time without harm.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who qualify for services will receive the academic modifications for which they are legally entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to register with the Office of Disability Services each semester and follow ODS procedures for obtaining assistance.

<http://www.ods.uno.edu/>

❖ Project Descriptions

Project 1 (due Sept. 11)

Job search and application materials

This project entails first conducting a real job search (online and in print) for three positions that interest you. You may want to seriously consider jobs or internships that are logical steps toward fulfilling your ultimate career goal. After you find three possibilities, you will create the necessary application documents for your top choice. In addition to being graded on the documents, you will be scored on how well you conduct your job search. The short **progress report** you will write for me will describe the methods of your search and then assess the success (or lack thereof) of your approach. Your progress report will also recommend the job-search resources you utilized that may be useful to others in your field. The writing and submission (to me) of your **résumé** and **letter of application** will follow the progress report. After that, you may mail them to a potential employer if you wish. (You will receive full project directions, including your assignments schedule, in the Project 1 section of Moodle.)

Project 2 (due Oct. 9)

Examination of the writing culture in your major

Your major (and eventually your chosen career) possesses its own writing culture. It is advantageous for you to investigate this culture to learn what skills are most valued. You will begin this project by writing a **letter of inquiry** to a person in your field you want to interview about the writing he/she does regularly. You will do this even if you set up the interview that will follow in another way—a phone call, for example. After the interview, you will submit an edited **Q&A Report** of what transpired. During the interview, you will ask your respondent for three documents that are indicative of the kind of writing he/she does frequently. You will then use these documents as source material for a written **analysis** of how different audiences and purposes call for different writing strategies and how one may “acculturate” oneself into this writing culture.

Project 3 (due Nov. 6)

Set of instructions and evaluation of a set of instructions

Your goal for this project is to write a **set of instructions** (a manual), which will then be performed (**usability test**) and evaluated by one of your peers, who will write an **evaluation report** of how effectively your manual described the process. In addition to your final set of instructions, a separate, detached **introduction** will indicate the purpose and audience of your instructions. You will draft “**front matter**” and “**back matter**” (see textbook) to accompany your instructions. Professional layout and graphic appeal will also be considered when grading your final product. The grade will be based (in equal parts) on the layout and the clarity of your manual, the usability test results, and the quality of the evaluation report you wrote for someone else. I will supply you all with ideas for instruction sets, but feel free to brainstorm on your own. In fact, I prefer that you do.

Project 4 (due Dec. 4)

Formal report

This is a substantial research project. You will be part of a media consulting firm that specializes in redeveloping commercial websites. Once you choose a client website, you will go about developing a plan for making it more successful, marketable, and user-friendly. Your recommendations will be presented in a **formal report**, which utilizes academic and market research to validate your plan for the website's redevelopment. This project requires that you employ the various modes of writing you practiced throughout the semester: reporting, analyzing, exemplifying, prescribing, and explaining.

Course Schedule

On Friday, you will receive directions for Project 1, including your complete assignment schedule for this first project. Our entire course schedule will be posted on Moodle so that I can easily update it throughout the semester.

You are to complete the following assignments for Wednesday.

8/19

- Course introduction and syllabus review
- Buy your textbook

8/21

- Complete the following diagnostic essay:
This class is a chance for you to develop an awareness of what you should do to become an initiated member in your professional field's writing culture. Describe what work you have done thus far in achieving this goal of becoming the best writer in your field you can be. How have your college courses, relatable work experiences, and reading habits helped you become a better communicator? How have they not helped? How can you take an initiative outside of your past and current experiences to become a better communicator? What personality/professional traits do colleagues in your field value? How can you foster these traits within yourself?

You can try to answer all of these questions in a cohesive manner, but you may be better off focusing on one or two. Elaborate and explain the relevance of the claims you make. Respond in at least 400 double-spaced, typed words using Times New Roman (12 pt. font)